

(4) A bloc of milk may be considered ineligible for pooling if the market administrator determines that handlers altered the reporting of such milk for the purpose of evading the provisions of this paragraph.

■ 3. Section 1030.85 is revised, to read as follows:

§ 1030.85 Assessment for order administration.

On or before the payment receipt date specified under § 1030.71, each handler shall pay to the market administrator its pro rata share of the expense of administration of the order at a rate specified by the market administrator that is no more than 8 cents per hundredweight with respect to:

(a) Receipts of producer milk (including the handler's own production) other than such receipts by a handler described in § 1000.9(c) that were delivered to pool plants of other handlers;

(b) Receipts from a handler described in § 1000.9(c);

(c) Receipts of concentrated fluid milk products from unregulated supply plants and receipts of nonfluid milk products assigned to Class I use pursuant to § 1000.43(d) and other source milk allocated to Class I pursuant to § 1000.44(a)(3) and (8) and the corresponding steps of § 1000.44(b), except other source milk that is excluded from the computations pursuant to § 1030.60(h) and (i); and

(d) Route disposition in the marketing area from a partially regulated distributing plant that exceeds the skim milk and butterfat subtracted pursuant to § 1000.76(a)(1)(i) and (ii).

Dated: October 25, 2006.

Lloyd C. Day,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 1032

[Docket No. AO-313-A48; DA-04-06]

Milk in the Central Marketing Area; Order Amending the Order

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This final rule amends regulations pertaining to the Central Federal milk order. More than the required number of producers for the

Central marketing area approved the issuance of the final order amendments.

DATES: *Effective Date:* December 1, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jack Rower, Marketing Specialist, Order Formulation and Enforcement Branch, USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs, STOP 0231-Room 2971, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0231, (202) 720-2357, e-mail address: jack.rower@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document amends the pooling provisions of the Central Federal milk order. Specifically, this final rule adopts provisions that: (1) Increase supply plant performance standards to 25 percent for the months of August through February and to 20 percent for the months of March through July; (2) Require the non-pool side of a split plant to maintain nonpool status for 12 months; (3) Amend the "touch-base" feature of the order to require that at least one day's production of the milk of a dairy farmer be received at a pool plant in each of the months of January, February, and August through November, to be eligible for diversion to non-pool plants; (4) Lower the diversion limit standards by five percentage points, from 80 percent to 75 percent, for the months of August through February, and by five percentage points, from 85 percent to 80 percent for the months of March through July; and (5) Establish provisions that limit the volume of milk a handler may pool in a month to 125 percent of the volume of milk pooled in the prior month.

This administrative action is governed by the provisions of Sections 556 and 557 of Title 5 of the United States Code and, therefore, is excluded from the requirements of Executive Order 12866. This final rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. The rule is not intended to have a retroactive effect. This rule will not preempt any state or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may request modification or exemption from such order by filing with the Secretary a petition stating that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with the law. A handler is afforded the opportunity for a hearing on the petition. After a

hearing, the Secretary will rule on the petition. The Act provides that the district court of the United States in any district in which the handler is an inhabitant, or has its principal place of business, has jurisdiction in equity to review the Department's ruling on the petition, provided a bill in equity is filed not later than 20 days after the date of the entry of the ruling.

Regulatory Flexibility Act and Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*), the Agricultural Marketing Service has considered the economic impact of this action on small entities and has certified that this final rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

For the purpose of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, a dairy farm is considered a "small business" if it has an annual gross revenue of less than \$750,000, and a dairy products manufacturer is a "small business" if it has fewer than 500 employees.

For the purposes of determining which dairy farms are "small businesses," the \$750,000 per year criterion was used to establish a production guideline of 500,000 pounds per month. Although this guideline does not factor in additional monies that may be received by dairy producers, it should be an inclusive standard for most "small" dairy farmers. For purposes of determining a handler's size, if the plant is part of a larger company operating multiple plants that collectively exceed the 500-employee limit, the plant will be considered a large business even if the local plant has fewer than 500 employees.

During January 2005, the time of the hearing, there were 5,778 dairy producers pooled on, and 23 handlers regulated by, the Central order. Approximately 5,365 producers, or 92.9 percent, were considered "small businesses" based on the above criteria. Of the 23 handlers regulated by the Central order during January 2005, 11 handlers, or 47.8 percent, were considered "small businesses."

The adopted amendments regarding the pooling standards serve to revise established criteria that determine those producers, producer milk, and plants that have a reasonable association with and consistently serve the fluid needs of the Central milk marketing area. Criteria for pooling milk are established on the basis of performance standards that are considered adequate to meet the Class I fluid needs of the market and, by doing so, to determine those producers who are eligible to share in the revenue that

arises from the classified pricing of milk.

Criteria for pooling are established without regard to the size of any dairy industry organization or entity. Therefore, the amendments will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

A review of reporting requirements was completed under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). It was determined that these amendments would have no impact on reporting, recordkeeping, or other compliance requirements because they would remain identical to the current requirements. No new forms are proposed and no additional reporting requirements would be necessary.

This action does not require additional information collection that requires clearance by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) beyond currently approved information collection. The primary sources of data used to complete the approved forms are routinely used in most business transactions. The forms require only a minimal amount of information which can be supplied without data processing equipment or a trained statistical staff. Thus, the information collection and reporting burden is relatively small. Requiring the same reports for all handlers does not significantly disadvantage any handler that is smaller than the industry average.

No other burdens are expected to fall on the dairy industry as a result of overlapping Federal rules. This rulemaking proceeding does not duplicate, overlap, or conflict with any existing Federal rules.

Prior Documents in This Proceeding

Notice of Hearing: Issued September 17, 2004; published September 22, 2004 (69 FR 56725).

Notice of Hearing Delay: Issued October 18, 2004; published October 13, 2004 (69 FR 61323).

Recommended Decision: Issued February 15, 2006; published February 22, 2006 (71 FR 9015).

Final Decision: Issued September 1, 2006; published September 13, 2006 (71 FR 54152).

Findings and Determinations

The findings and determinations hereinafter set forth supplement those that were made when the Central order was first issued and when it was amended. The previous findings and determinations are hereby ratified and confirmed, except where they may conflict with those set forth herein.

The following findings are hereby made with respect to the Mideast order:

(a) *Findings upon the basis of the hearing record:* A public hearing was held upon certain proposed amendment to the tentative marketing agreement and to the order regulating the handling of milk in the Central marketing area. The hearing was held pursuant to the provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601–604), the applicable rules of practice and procedure (7 CFR part 900).

Upon the basis of the evidence introduced at such hearing and the record thereof, will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act;

(1) The Central order as hereby amended, and all of the terms and conditions thereof, will tend to effectuate the declared policy of the Act;

(2) The parity prices of milk as determined pursuant to Section 2 of the Act are not reasonable in view of the price of feeds, available supplies of feeds, and other economic conditions which affect market supply and demand for milk in the marketing area, and the minimum prices specified in the tentative marketing agreement and the order, as hereby proposed to be amended, are such prices as will reflect the aforesaid factors, insure a sufficient quantity of pure and wholesome milk, and be in the public interest; and

(3) The Central order as hereby amended regulates the handling of milk in the same manner as, and is applicable only to persons in the respective classes of industrial or commercial activity specified in, a marketing agreement upon which a hearing has been held.

(b) *Additional Findings:* It is necessary and in the public interest to make these amendments to the Central order effective December 1, 2006. Any delay beyond that date would tend to disrupt the orderly marketing of milk in the aforesaid marketing area.

The amendments to the Central order are known to handlers. The final decision containing the proposed amendments to the order was issued on September 1, 2006.

The changes that result from these amendments will not require extensive preparation or substantial alteration in the method of operation for handlers. In view of the foregoing, it is hereby found and determined that good cause exists for making these order amendments effective December 1, 2006.

(c) *Determinations:* It is hereby determined that:

(1) The refusal or failure of handlers (excluding cooperative associations specified in Sec. 8c(9) of the Act) of more than 50 percent of the milk that is marketed within the specified marketing area to sign a proposed marketing agreement tends to prevent the

effectuation of the declared policy of the Act;

(2) The issuance of this order amending the Central order is the only practical means pursuant to the declared policy of the Act of advancing the interests of producers as defined by the order as hereby amended;

(3) The issuance of the order amending the Central order is favored by at least two-thirds of the producers who were engaged in the production of milk for sale in the marketing area.

List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 1032

Milk marketing orders.

Order Relative to Handling

■ *It is therefore ordered*, that on and after the effective date hereof, the handling of milk in the Central marketing area shall be in conformity to and in compliance with the terms and conditions of the order, as amended, and as hereby amended, as follows:

PART 1032—MILK IN THE CENTRAL MARKETING AREA

■ 1. The authority citation for 7 CFR part 1032 is amended to read as follows:

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 601–674, and 7253.

■ 2. Section 1032.7 is amended by revising paragraph (c) introductory text and paragraph (h)(7), to read as follows:

§ 1032.7 Pool plant.

* * * * *

(c) A supply plant from which the quantity of bulk fluid milk products shipped to (and physically unloaded into) plants described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section is not less than 25 percent during the months of August through February and 20 percent in all other months of the Grade A milk received from dairy farmers (except dairy farmers described in § 1032.12(b)) and from handlers described in § 1000.9(c), including milk diverted pursuant to § 1032.13, subject to the following conditions:

* * * * *

(h) * * *

(7) That portion of a regulated plant designated as a nonpool plant that is physically separate and operated separately from the pool portion of such plant. The designation of a portion of a plant must be requested in advance and in writing by the handler and must be approved by the market administrator. Such nonpool status shall be effective on the first day of the month following approval of the request by the market administrator and thereafter for the longer of twelve (12) consecutive months or until notification of the

desire to requalify as a pool plant, in writing, is received by the market administrator. Requalification will require deliveries to a pool distributing plant(s) as provided for in § 1032.7(c). For requalification, handlers may not use milk delivered directly from producer's farms pursuant to § 1000.9(c) or § 1032.13(c) for the first month.

- 3. Section 1032.13 is amended by:
 - a. Revising paragraph (d)(1);
 - b. Redesignating paragraphs (d)(2) through (d)(6) as paragraphs (d)(4) through (d)(8);
 - c. Adding new paragraphs (d)(2) and (d)(3);
 - d. Revising newly redesignated paragraph (d)(4); and
 - e. Adding a new paragraph (f).

The revisions and additions read as follows:

§ 1032.13 Producer milk.

* * * * *

(d) * * *

(1) Milk of a dairy farmer shall not be eligible for diversion until milk of such dairy farmer has been physically received as producer milk at a pool plant and the dairy farmer has continuously retained producer status since that time. If a dairy farmer loses producer status under the order in this part (except as a result of a temporary loss of Grade A approval), the dairy farmer's milk shall not be eligible for diversion until milk of the dairy farmer has been physically received as producer milk at a pool plant;

(2) The equivalent of at least one day's milk production is caused by the handler to be physically received at a pool plant in each of the months of January and February, and August through November;

(3) The equivalent of at least one day's milk production is caused by the handler to be physically received at a pool plant in each of the months of March through July and December if the requirement of paragraph (d)(2) of this section (§ 1032.13) in each of the prior months of August through November and January through February are not met, except in the case of a dairy farmer who marketed no Grade A milk during each of the prior months of August through November or January through February.

(4) Of the quantity of producer milk received during the month (including diversions, but excluding the quantity of producer milk received from a handler described in § 1000.9(c)) the handler diverts to nonpool plants not more than 75 percent during the months of August through February, and not more than 80 percent during the months of March through July, provided that not less than

25 percent of such receipts in the months of August through February and 20 percent of the remaining months' receipts are delivered to plants described in § 1032.7(a), (b), or (i);

* * * * *

(f) The quantity of milk reported by a handler pursuant to § 1032.30(a)(1) and/or § 1032.30(c)(1) for the current month may not exceed 125 percent of the producer milk receipts pooled by the handler during the prior month. Milk diverted to nonpool plants reported in excess of this limit shall be removed from the pool. Milk received at pool plants in excess of the 125 percent limit, other than pool distributing plants, shall be classified pursuant to § 1000.44(a)(3)(v). The handler must designate, by producer pick-up, which milk is to be removed from the pool. If the handler fails to provide this information the provisions of paragraph (d)(5) of this section shall apply. The following provisions apply:

(1) Milk shipped to and physically received at pool distributing plants shall not be subject to the 125 percent limitation;

(2) Producer milk qualified pursuant to § ____ .13 of any other Federal Order in the previous month shall not be included in the computation of the 125 percent limitation; provided that the producers comprising the milk supply have been continuously pooled on any Federal Order for the entirety of the most recent three consecutive months.

(3) The market administrator may waive the 125 percent limitation:

(i) For a new handler on the order, subject to the provisions of paragraph (f)(3) of this section, or

(ii) For an existing handler with significantly changed milk supply conditions due to unusual circumstances;

(4) A bloc of milk may be considered ineligible for pooling if the market administrator determines that handlers altered the reporting of such milk for the purpose of evading the provisions of this paragraph.

Dated: October 25, 2006.

Lloyd C. Day,

Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

7 CFR Part 1033

[Docket No. AO-166-A72; DA-05-01-B]

Milk in the Mideast Marketing Area; Order Amending the Order

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This final rule amends regulations pertaining to the Mideast Federal milk order. More than the required number of producers for the Mideast marketing area approved the issuance of the final order amendments.

DATES: *Effective Date:* December 1, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gino Tosi, Associate Deputy Administrator, Order Formulation and Enforcement Branch, USDA/AMS/Dairy Programs, STOP 0231—Room 2968, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0231, (202) 690-1366, e-mail: gino.tosi@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document amends the pooling provisions of the Mideast Federal milk order. Specifically, this final rule permanently adopts provisions that: (1) Establish a limit on the volume of milk a handler may pool during the months of April through February to 115 percent of the volume of milk pooled in the prior month; and (2) Establish a limit on the volume of milk a handler may pool during the month of March to 120 percent of the volume of milk pooled in the prior month.

This administrative action is governed by the provisions of Sections 556 and 557 of Title 5 of the United States Code and, therefore, is excluded from the requirements of Executive Order 12866. This final rule has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. The rule is not intended to have a retroactive effect. This rule will not preempt any state or local laws, regulations, or policies, unless they present an irreconcilable conflict with this rule.

The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 601-674), provides that administrative proceedings must be exhausted before parties may file suit in court. Under section 608c(15)(A) of the Act, any handler subject to an order may request modification or exemption from such order by filing with the Secretary a petition stating that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is